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After Geneva * R.P.D.

Bankers versus Britain * Margot Heinemann

The Middle Eastern Question * R. Page Arnot

When Trade Unions Unite * Louis Saillant

Behind The Times * Angela Tuckett

The Soviet Navy Today * Cmdr. E. P. Young, R.N., Ret'd.

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Angela Tuckett will be back on this page next month with readers' news. For October donations list see page 572.

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Notes of the Month

After Geneva

'A single breaker may recede; but the tide is evidently coming in.'
MACAULAY.

A BALANCED view is necessary of the outcome of the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers. Whatever the final communiqué (for these lines have to be written before the conclusion), it is evident that the Conference of Foreign Ministers has yielded less favourable results than the Conference of Heads of States in July. No agreement could yet be reached on the basic questions of European security and Germany, or of disarmament, or even on such a relatively simple issue as the lifting of the bans on East-West trade. Nevertheless, the attempted analogies with the deadlocks of previous conferences on these problems would be out of relation to the real situation. The Geneva

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Conference of July set the task to reach agreed negotiated compromise solutions on three basic issues. That task has not yet been fulfilled. But the work goes on. The real lesson of the latest Geneva meeting is, not that the solutions cannot be reached, but that the same public pressure which compelled the initial top-level meeting, despite previous prolonged resistance, now needs to be actively exercised to compel the advance to negotiated solutions on the concrete issues in accordance with the original Geneva Directive.

Western No

What blocked the road to advance at Geneva is clear. It is not necessary to go so far as to endorse the judgment of prominent Western publicists, who not only predicted deadlock on the eve of the conference, but even explicitly stated that the Western Foreign Ministers went into the conference with the intention of reaching deadlock:

> Hypocrisy is an ugly word. Yet this is the only word that properly describes the Western Governments' approach to the Geneva meeting of Foreign Ministers.
>
> (Alsop Brothers, *New York Herald-Tribune*, October 24, 1955.)

This is a harsh judgment, since it leaves out of account that it is the vital interest of the Western powers, no less than of the socialist world, to reach a settlement, even though there may not yet be agreement on the conditions of a settlement. The real trouble may be more accurately described in the following terms. The Western Foreign Ministers, having met in separate conference beforehand to lay down a rigid fixed unalterable position, thereby excluding genuine four-power negotiations, and indeed in defiance of the principle of four-power negotiations (why in that case send three Ministers? why not send one delegate with the mandate?), dug in their heels and maintained an unchanging negative to every constructive proposition. No European security plan without a rearmed Germany in N.A.T.O. No German reunification apart from N.A.T.O. No disarmament, but only inspection. No removal of the artificial strategic barriers to East-West trade. Thus the very system of sectional military blocs and cold war strategy, which it was the object of Geneva to remove and replace by the methods of peaceful co-existence and collective security, was not only maintained as inviolable, but was actually made a prior sacrosanct condition before considering any proposal for a settlement. Such an

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approach automatically excluded any possibility of a settlement. This eternal Western No doomed the conference to sterility for the time being on all the basic issues requiring to be solved in the interests of peace.

Longer Perspective

Does this mean, as many Western commentators have hastened with all too obvious eagerness and even ill-concealed jubilation to conclude, that 'the Geneva spirit has evaporated', that what the *New York Times* was pleased to call the 'phony peace' of Geneva in July has ended, and that we are back in the old conditions of cold war and tension? It would be short-sighted indeed to jump to such conclusions. The Geneva Conference of Heads of States was and remains an historic turning point of the whole international situation since the war. It registered the fiasco of the cold war strategy of the past decade, and of the whole policy of endeavouring to impose solutions by superior strength. It reflected the universal revolt of public opinion in all countries against the loudly proclaimed plans for an atomic third world war, and the united demand for a policy of negotiations in place of the policy of strength. And it revealed that, in face of this manifest bankruptcy of the old policies and universal public demand for the alternative policy of negotiation, the Western leaders had at last recognised the necessity to agree to the top-level negotiations, which they had previously so long declined, and to endorse officially the principle of peaceful co-existence. This was a giant step forward, even though only the first step. Our task is to see that this first step is now followed by the second, which necessarily flows from it.

From Negotiation in Principle to Negotiation in Practice

What is this second step? It is one thing to agree to negotiation in principle. It is another thing to advance from the old cold war policies, which exclude the possibility of a negotiated settlement, to the alternative policies which make possible a negotiated settlement. This is the second step which now requires to be taken. The difficulty does not lie in any inherent impossibility of reaching a solution on European collective security, or German reunification and elections, or the reduction of armaments, provided there is the will to reach such a solution and not to let past policies stand in the way. The difficulty lies precisely in the survival of the past pre-Geneva policies, and the clinging to those past policies, in the Paris and

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Bonn Agreements, the rearming of Hitler's generals, the advocacy of nuclear warfare, the refusal to repudiate the aim of dismantling the people's democracies in Eastern Europe, the exclusion of China from the United Nations, the strategic bans in restraint of trade—in short, the whole system of the cold war strategy, which was based on pre-Geneva assumptions, and to which the Western powers still cling, although the entire situation points to the imperative necessity to advance to an alternative policy. The Western powers still want to have it both ways. On the one hand, they proclaim the aim to negotiate a settlement which should end the cold war. On the other hand, they insist on the retention of every jot and tittle of their cold war policies as an indispensable part of such a settlement, and even complain that refusal to accept them is equivalent to refusal to accept peaceful co-existence. This is a manifestly inconsistent and untenable position which the pressure of facts and of public opinion will have to compel to be changed.

Cold War Counter-Offensive

The difficulties of the present stage stem to a certain extent from the very success of the first Geneva conference. This success alerted all the most aggressive and bellicose champions of the cold war to sound the alarm and enter on the most intense and concentrated counter-offensive to denounce the results of Geneva, sneer at the 'Geneva spirit', warn against any relaxation of international tension or friendship with the Soviet Union, and speed up all military preparations and activities. On the other hand, popular opinion, whose active pressure had ensured the initial victory of Geneva, was so encouraged by the victory as to be inclined to regard the main battle for peace as already won, and the danger of war as receding into the distance. It is significant that the sentiment 'there ain't gonna be no war' was most sedulously propagated for popular consumption by the Tory Foreign Secretary, at the very same time as he was most actively engaged in speeding forward Nazi re-armament, resisting every proposal for disarmament and pressing forward the preparations for nuclear war. The lesson of every popular campaign teaches that the moment of initial victory ('Red Friday') can also be the moment of danger—since the enemy at once steps up his measures to retrieve the lost ground and prepare for a decisive second round—unless the initial victory is immediately followed up by intensified activity to press forward the advance and ensure durable results. During the critical three months between

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the two Geneva conferences, while the complex preparations for the Foreign Ministers' Conference were proceeding, the main weight of public attention became transferred to the grave problems of the internal situation in each country, at the very moment when the enemies of peace were launching their heaviest counter-offensive.

'Trap of Peace'

There can be no doubt of the overwhelming popular enthusiasm in all countries without exception which greeted the results of the Geneva Conference of July and the relaxation of international tension arising from it. But very different sentiments began to be expressed with increasing openness in influential official and semi-official quarters in the West. Already by July 31 the *Sunday Times* was reporting the 'misgivings now felt by many senior British, French and United States officials about the dangers of public over-estimation of the "success" of the Geneva Conference'. The United States Administration, wrote James Reston in the *New York Times* on August 25, 'has reached a policy decision to put a brake on the optimism created by the Big Four Conference'. The Washington correspondent of *The Times* on August 29 described the 'anxiety' of the State Department over the 'dangerous enthusiasm' of popular opinion for Geneva, and the 'fears that the American people, with their evident desire for friendship, might swing too far from their old distrust of the Russians to eagerly embracing them'. 'The problem', proclaimed the *Wall Street Journal* on August 31, 'is how to keep peace from bursting out all over'. And by October 24, on the very eve of the Geneva Foreign Ministers' Conference, the same *Wall Street Journal* was able to write an editorial under the heading 'The Trap of Peace'.

Generals versus Geneva

Even more explicit and unconcealed was the hostility of N.A.T.O. headquarters and all the leading United States and British military, naval and air chiefs to Geneva. 'Black gloom among military planners' was described by the *U.S. News and World Report* on August 19 as the response to Geneva. The *New York Times* of August 14 reported United States commanders to be 'deeply concerned over disquieting trends' arising from 'the Geneva atmosphere' and the consequent fear that 'the United States one million servicemen overseas in more than 900 foreign stations might be reduced as a result' (no wonder the Soviet evacuation of the only remaining

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two Soviet foreign bases, Port Arthur and Porkkala, sent a cold shiver down the spines of the Pentagon planners with their over 900 foreign bases). All the big guns, Gruenther, Montgomery, Mountbatten, Ismay, Radford and the rest charged into action to issue repeated portentous warnings against the 'Geneva spirit', and to demand the maintenance of maximum tension and the speeding up of military preparations. Stonewall opposition was maintained in the United Nations against any proposals for disarmament, even against proposals originally put forward by the Western powers as soon as the Soviet Union accepted them. 'The Pentagon', wrote the *New York Herald Tribune* columnist already on July 18, 'is undyingly opposed to a serious disarmament effort'. 'The objective of United States policy', wrote James Reston in the *New York Times* on September 6, 'for the foreseeable future is not disarmament at all'. The British Air Marshal Sir George Mills demanded at Melbourne on September 15 that 'we must build more bombers and make sure they are bigger and better than those of anyone else'. Such was the encouraging chorus from Western military quarters in response to the successive Soviet pacific moves and in preparation for the second Geneva Conference.

War Moves and Plans

While the Soviet Union was reducing its armed forces by 640,000, evacuating Porkkala, or establishing peaceful diplomatic relations with Adenauer (a 'shock', declared Western commentators), the Western powers were speeding up their activities to build their chain of military alliances over the world and preparations for nuclear war. It was symbolic that Hitler's old generals, the Speidels, Heusingers, Manteuffels and the rest who had ravaged Europe resumed their functions and uniforms on November 12 under the blessing of the Western powers at the very moment of the Geneva Conference which was supposed to be directed to the aim of ensuring European security. In the Middle East the building of the chain of openly anti-Soviet military alliances on the basis of the Baghdad Pact continued; and when Egypt, faithful to the principles of Bandung, refused to enter the imperialist war bloc, every form of pressure and blackmail was exercised on Egypt, simultaneously through the denial of arms for defence and the encouragement of the American-inspired and militarist forces in Israel to conduct the series of aggressive border attacks from Gaza in February onwards (registered as aggressive by the United Nations Truce Commission),

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alongside increasing clamour for a preventive war, while Egypt was denied the arms for defence except on terms of surrender to the imperialist war plans. This dangerous situation was only saved by the Czech-Egyptian arms agreement, which enabled Egypt to withstand the imperialist pressure and maintain its independence, and began to encourage other Arab states to make a corresponding stand. In South-East Asia the dictatorship of Diem was installed in South Vietnam under American control with the openly avowed aim to prevent the fulfilment of the 1954 Geneva agreement for free elections in Vietnam ('the key to American policy is the determination of the United States to refuse to permit the general elections proposed for July, 1956', *Manchester Guardian*, May 27—a biting comment on the spurious agitation about German 'free elections' to cover the reality of Nazi rearmament).

Germ Warfare

To cap all, at the very height of the Geneva Conference the United States came out with the decision on November 6 to step up still further (increasing the allocation to the U.S. Chemical Corps from $42 million to $61 million) its already extensive concentration on germ warfare and kindred methods of 'biological, radiological and chemical warfare' to be developed 'to the fullest extent the human mind can encompass'. The Report laying down the lines for this development 'stressed that weapons and agents developed in the Chemical Corps have a "unique potential" in that they would not destroy property' (*The Times*, November 7). A most attractive argument. The Report further criticised the 'lack of public understanding' of the desirability and advantages of germ warfare, poisoning the enemy, etc., and castigated the mistaken tendency to regard such methods as 'horrifying' (the Western press commentators who so easily and gullibly swallowed the indignant tongue-in-cheek denials about the facts of American germ warfare in Korea as a supposed outrageous and incredible slander will now have to have second thoughts). 'The committee urged franker recognition of the proper place of chemical and biological warfare.'

Geneva Directive

Such was the far from propitious atmosphere of Western policy when the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers met. Amid the clangour of Hitler's generals receiving back their army commands

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it was difficult to discuss European security seriously. In vain the Western Ministers and press sought to cover up the ugly reality by raising a clamour about 'German free elections'—*before* a German peace treaty, *before* evacuation of foreign troops from Germany, *without* consultation of the Germans themselves, and without any attempt to consider the concrete problems of the disparity of conditions in the two existing states, when in the East the Junkers and Nazis and supporters of Hitler had been completely removed from every position of power, while in the West the militarists and monopolists and backers of Hitler were back in power, dominating every department of state, and receiving Nazi war criminals with festal celebrations and official congratulations, at the same time as the fighters against fascism, the Communists and partisans of peace were thrown into prison, and the Government was engaged in legal action to make the Communist Party illegal. Sublime conditions for truly 'democratic' elections worthy of the United States Deep South or of the régime of Diem or Syngman Rhee. It is obvious that the question of elections in Germany could only follow on and be dependent on the solution of the problem of European security. And this is precisely what the Geneva Directive said.

Repudiating the Geneva Directive

The Geneva Directive was explicit. The first point dealt with 'European Security and Germany'. The first paragraph dealt with the necessity of 'establishing European security'. The second paragraph dealt with the question of 'a security pact for Europe', including the possibility of a zone of reduced armaments and inspection 'between East and West'. The third paragraph dealt with the necessity for settling 'the German question' and 'the reunification of Germany'; and it was only at this point, after some two hundred and sixty words of prior directives, that German elections came into the picture with the specific provision that such elections must be 'in conformity with the national interests of the German people and the interests of European security'. Clear enough. To counter this, the Western Ministers were compelled to repudiate in practice the Geneva Directive by putting German elections first, since they were bent on first extending the power of Hitler's generals over the whole of Germany and incorporating such a remilitarised Germany in the Western military bloc as the indispensable condition of accepting a European Security Treaty—which such conditions would make a mockery.

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Curious Geography of 'East' and 'West'

The mockery of the Geneva Directive was underlined by the Western proposals on the inspection zone between East and West. The original Eden Plan had proposed such a zone of inspection and reduced armaments on the two sides of the demarcation line in Germany. This was incorporated in the Geneva Directive outlining the suggestion of such a zone 'between East and West'. Since this, however, would have involved recognising the existence of two states and governments in Germany, the revised Western plan presented at Geneva had to repudiate equally the Eden Plan and the Geneva Directive, and to propose that the zone 'between East and West' should be sited (1) in the territory of the German Democratic Republic (2) in Poland. A sufficiently comic 'interpretation' of the Geneva Directive. Similarly it was significant that Dulles in his opening speech on the first day of the conference outlined its three tasks as German unity, disarmament and East-West contacts. With unconscious self-revelation he 'forgot' about European security altogether.

Blocking German Unity by N.A.T.O.

Repeatedly, over three successive days Molotov again and again pressed the Western Ministers to answer two plain questions:

1. Is the remilitarisation of a united Germany within N.A.T.O. an *absolute condition* of any European security treaty?

2. What do the Western Ministers suggest should be done if *such* a Germany should break loose from the restrictions allegedly imposed by membership of N.A.T.O. and begin rebuilding aggressor blocs of its own?

Every time Molotov put these questions, the three Ministers twisted and wriggled like eels—but always evaded answering. For in fact they were making the provision for the inclusion of a united Germany in N.A.T.O. the indispensable condition for German unification; if this were not agreed, no German unification. This calculation was instructively made clear by the very wording of the Western plan, which declared that the proposed security treaty's 'final stage would become effective *when* a reunified Germany decides to enter N.A.T.O.' *Not 'if', but 'when'.* Thus the Western powers' insistence on German remilitarisation in N.A.T.O. in fact blocked the path to a united Germany. They preferred a remilitarised Western Germany in N.A.T.O., with the consequent continuance of a divided Germany, to a united peaceful Germany outside sectional military alliances and participating in collective European security.

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Munich Rides Again

Thus the insistence on the inclusion of a remilitarised Germany in a Western military bloc was the essential stumbling block of the conference. This was the real issue which it was attempted to hide behind talk about the secondary and derivative question of German elections. Hitler's generals are already rearmed in Western Germany. The present Western aim is to extend the range of Hitler's generals to the whole of Germany, that is, to the frontiers of Poland. And Hitler's generals, and the Bonn Government behind them, have already made clear that they do not recognise the frontiers of Poland. For the sake of rearming Hitler's generals German unity is in fact sacrificed. For the sake of a remilitarised Western Germany European security is sacrificed. The division of Europe into opposing military blocs, with a revived German militarism once again the strongest military power in Western Europe, is declared to be the path of safety. Munich rides again. Could suicidal folly—the more inexcusable because repeated a second time—go further? But are there not paper 'guarantees' in N.A.T.O., the revived Munichites anxiously declare, that Hitler's generals will only march under the command of Britain, France and the United States? No doubt. So there were 'guarantees' before. In the midst of the Geneva Conference the *Tribune de Genève* came out with a streamer headline 'Thirty Years Since the Birth of the Spirit of Locarno' accompanied by photographs of Chamberlain, Stresemann and Briand celebrating the 'guarantee pact' of Locarno 30 years ago. We know what followed. Fortunately there are strong powers this time to bar the way to the revived German militarism; and the resistance of the Soviet Union to the attempt to revive Munich at Geneva has won time for the Western peoples to think again and change the course before it is too late.

Alternative Currents

For the firm stand of the Soviet Union at Geneva in favour of collective security in Europe and the reduction of armaments, as against the revival of German militarism, a new Munich alliance and extension of the arms race, corresponds to the true interests, not only of the Soviet people and of the peoples of Eastern Europe, who have experienced Nazi aggression and occupation on their soil, but equally of the French people, who have no less directly experienced it, of the British and American peoples, who have had their share of experience of Nazi aggression, and also of the German

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people, who have suffered twice the deadly consequences of the world wars conducted by their militarists. It is only necessary to note the undercurrents of comment in the more responsible organs of the British and French press (the *Manchester Guardian* description of the Western plan at Geneva as 'cynical and hypocritical', the kites flown by *The Times* and *Observer* for an alternative solution on European security and Germany, giving rise to anxious repudiation by the Foreign Office, or the *Monde* scathing denunciation of the bankruptcy of Western policy at Geneva), no less than the explicit stand of West German Social Democracy, corresponding to wide sections of influential opinion in West Germany, for unification outside any sectional military alliances—it is only necessary to study these comments from wide and responsible circles in the West to sense the deep disquiet that is felt over the sterility and dangers of the Western Ministers' policy at Geneva which prevented the conference from reaching positive results.

Not the Last Word

This setback at Geneva is not the last word. On the contrary, the stultifying policy pursued by the Western Ministers at Geneva will involve them in deepening dilemmas. For, despite the obstacles to peace revealed at Geneva, the currents of history are not moving in the direction desired by the Gruenthers, Montgomerys and Radfords. The German people will not indefinitely accept the refusal of unification for the sake of N.A.T.O. *Monde,* in the article to which reference has been made, on November 8, estimated that, if the British and French peoples were consulted, the majority of the British people probably, and certainly the overwhelming majority of the French people, would be opposed to the Western plan presented at Geneva. New political trends are stirring in France, and may show themselves in the prospective elections. North Africa, Cyprus, Egypt, the Middle East, no less than India, Malaya and Vietnam, all reveal that the majority of the peoples of the world are in revolt against the Atlantic Powers N.A.T.O. system of colonialism and sectional military blocs, and in favour of national independence, peaceful co-existence and collective peace. If the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers failed to reach a fruitful result on the concrete problems set before it, then it is only all the more necessary to return to the task and make the full weight of popular opinion felt for the indispensable aims—to replace the dangerous confrontation of opposing military alliances, rearmed

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Nazi militarism and rival armaments by peaceful co-existence, collective security and the reduction of armaments.

Into the Campaign

No people has a more vital interest in achieving this objective than the British people. For the price of the disastrous policy pursued by the Tory Government—in fact, with right-wing Labour support—at Geneva is being paid by the people at home in the shape of Butler's Budget, rising prices, the offensive on housing subsidies and to raise rents, the dissolution of the myth of Tory 'prosperity', and the maintenance of the two years call-up. Against all this the movement of the people has risen and is rising, as the advance in the level of strikes this year has indicated. But we are still only at the beginning of the fight that is needed. No doubt a stage has been reached when even right wing leaders of the General Council are compelled to speak of the inevitability of new wage demands following on Butler's offensive on living standards; the Parliamentary Labour Party has been galvanised into making a vociferous display of a parliamentary sham fight against the Budget, while less noisily accepting its essential principles. But the role of the dominant leadership in the labour movement hampers and holds back the development of the struggle that is needed, precisely because they accept all the foundations of the Tory military-imperialist policy (Nazi rearmament, N.A.T.O., colonial wars, etc.) which inevitably throws a heavy economic price on Britain, and are therefore unable either to fight the Tory measures with any conviction or to present any constructive alternative. For this reason it is the more necessary that the fight for an alternative policy, equally for peace and for the living standards of the people, and to defeat and bring down the Tory Government, shall be pressed forward by all the active sections of the labour movement and the mobilisation of the people. It is for the aim of such a mobilisation that the Communist Party has launched its campaign under the slogan 'The People Will Decide'—a slogan which is in fact a call to action alike for the cause of peace and for the future of Britain.

November 15, 1955. R.P.D.

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BANKERS VERSUS BRITAIN

MARGOT HEINEMANN

BUTLER gave the signal for the autumn Budget at Istanbul in mid-September (where, significantly, he was addressing the big chiefs of world finance at the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and International Bank). Denouncing rumours of devaluation and early convertibility, he declared:

> We do not contemplate any early move on any—I repeat any—aspects of the exchange front. *We must first go through the arduous process of strengthening our internal and competitive position.*—(September 14, 1955.)

He went on to explain to the bankers what he would do to 'strengthen the internal position'. He would 'examine the whole field of public expenditure', and 'take whatever steps are necessary to free goods to meet export demands'. Above all, 'it is not by physical controls that we intend to solve our difficulties', but 'by getting to the heart of the matter, the balance of supply and demand for labour and materials at home'.

To cut home demand—in practice, to cut the real wages and living standards of the working class—is the Tory capitalist policy in a nutshell, as it has been throughout the growing crisis of British imperialism. The capitalists themselves have made it clear that their object in this is not simply to export enough to pay for the imported food and raw materials needed by the British people (though this is how the matter is generally presented in both Tory and Labour press). The aim is a different one—to rebuild the economic, financial and military power of British imperialism; to make the pound look the dollar in the face, and enable the City to regain its former glory as a centre (though no longer *the* centre) of imperialist investment and financial control. The issue was put frankly in the Budget debate by Sir Edward Boyle, Economic Secretary to the Treasury:

> We . . . are pursuing a long-term policy. In the first place, it is our policy to strengthen sterling in the exchange markets of the world. . . . Secondly we wish to work all the time for a large surplus on our overseas payments. We need this surplus to repay debt and for Commonwealth development, and also to enable us to do more overseas investment. We also want to advance to a freer system of trade and payments.
>
> (*Hansard*, October 28, 1955.)

It is the attempt to do all this which produces the huge military burden and the weakness of the pound.

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The inflationary 'home demand' which Butler is anxious to cut is not, of course, caused by high wages or social services, though the Tories continually try to suggest that it is. Their more serious economists have to admit that 'the boom at present is even more an investment boom than a consumption boom' (Boyle, *loc. cit.*)—that it is based, in fact, on swollen profits and profit expectations deriving largely from the arms drive but including every kind of speculative and luxury investment. In 1954-55, Butler had to admit, money wages rose 7 per cent. and dividends 22 per cent. Nevertheless, it is the demand from wages and social services which Butler's measures set out to reduce. Defence expenditure is sacred, because it is the means to colonial super-profits and war threats against Socialist countries. Profits are sacred because they are what the capitalists are in business for: and indeed to re-establish overseas lending and invest in automation profits should be even bigger. That leaves wages and social services. Anyway it is wages and social services that the financiers want cut, as they did in 1931.

The Tories have not, however, made as much progress as they hoped in the last four years in cutting living standards. Partly they were limited until 1955 by the narrowness of their Parliamentary majority (and the considerable degree of militancy amongst the workers which that implied). But more important has been the strong resistance of the trade union movement in conditions of full employment. Whenever the Tories set out to raise prices and thus reduce real wages, notably through the cuts in food subsidies and the removal of price control, the employers were besieged with wage demands, backed in many cases (as they had not been under the Labour Government) by the threat of national strike action. Wages accordingly did far better in the race with prices than they had done from 1945 to 1951 (when illusions were widespread that given wage restraint, the government would bring prices down). The new cuts, therefore, must be more drastic and far-reaching than the old if they are to do the job—and this they certainly are.

The Tories, of course, try to make out that the cuts are so slight that the workers will hardly notice them. Thus the extra Purchase Tax charges on necessities (while the tax on luxuries is cut) will, we are told, raise the cost-of-living index only by 1 per cent. ('After all, one is not buying saucepans and pails every single week'). In practice, people usually have to buy their kitchen and household equipment in a lump, when they first set up a home of their own: and so for young couples the increase will be very heavy. Anyway,

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even 1 per cent. means two shillings a week on a £10 wage—not a negligible rise at a time when rents, fares, coal are all going up sharply.

Again, presenting the much more important matter of rents and housing cuts, Mr. Sandys alleged that the abolition of housing subsidies on new houses would only add something like 8d. a week to the average of all Council rents each year for the next five years—assuming, that is, that every authority pools its housing subsidies and concentrates them on the expensive houses built since the war, thus increasing the rents of the cheaper houses built earlier. Further, if the local authorities do as the government advises and operate a differential rents scheme, the poorest tenants will not have to pay any extra rent at all, he claims.

This, however, gives no measure of the rent increases tenants will have to face. For the ending of the subsidy is only the latest turn of the screw to force up Council rents. Herbert Morrison gave figures showing that for a flat on high-cost land in a large urban area, costing £2,000, the rise in interest rates and cut in subsidies this year means an increase of 16s. 3d. in the rent, of which 4s. 8d. is due to the latest statement on reduction of subsidies. This means tremendously sharpening the existing financial crisis for local authorities, most of whom were already raising rents on their older housing before Sandys' statement. In the L.C.C., for example, an average rise of 3s. 6d. a week or so was already involved, with a lodger charge (even for relatives) on top of this. Under differential rents schemes aimed at dividing the tenants, those above the lowest wage or pension level will pay considerably more than the average.

By forcing local authorities to borrow on the money market, instead of from the Public Works Loans Board, the Government is ensuring that the rates of interest will go still higher for those authorities who can get loans at all. The smaller and financially weaker authorities will have to go back to the Board and will get their money, if at all, at an increased rate ('reflecting their own credit and not Government credit'). For the banks and issuing houses this means more interest and commission, but for the Council tenants it means rents will go up still further, while local authorities will face acute financial difficulties in undertaking even the most necessary housing and other capital work.

The main effect intended, however, is to cut down drastically, and eventually to stop altogether, all Council house-building except a limited amount for slum clearance. This has two great advantages from the Tory and capitalist point of view:

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1. It stops the local authorities competing with the private speculative builder in providing houses and therefore enables him to build more houses for sale at higher prices. (Just before the Budget, Sir Harry Selley, President of the Federation of Master Builders, was publicly demanding an end of subsidised housing.)

2. It clears the way for a general rise in the rents of houses owned by private landlords. (The Government is to 'review' the Rent Restriction Acts, under which these private rents are now controlled, with a view to raising them, and quite possibly removing rent control altogether.)

Thus the Butler Budget does not mean a cut of 8d. a week for rent and 2s. a week for purchase tax, but a cut running into pounds as the policy works itself out. It is clear, too, that the Tories intend to push the attack further, if this lot goes through without too much trouble from the organised workers. There is a rising clamour, led by papers like the *Economist* and joined by many Tory M.P.s, to abolish subsidies on houses already built (which would raise rents again with a bump); to abolish the remaining food subsidies, including that on bread; to make patients pay for hospital beds; and to stop providing free milk and orange juice to mothers and babies except for the poorest who would qualify under a Means Test.

These attacks are not merely designed to save the Government money—they are deliberately aimed, by cutting purchasing power, to increase unemployment to what the capitalists regard as a healthy level. Thus the employers hope to gain the whip-hand over the trade unions and strengthen their own power to resist the wage-claims to which the Budget will certainly give impetus. For propaganda reasons it is, of course, impossible for the Tories to call this particular spade a spade. They are all in favour of full employment. They are only against 'over-full employment'; all they want Mr. Butler to do is to 'blow the froth off the brimfull economy' (in the *Banker's* elegant phrase). But their meaning is clear enough.

> The rate of unemployment at which this country must seek equilibrium may not be as high as seemed likely to be necessary just after the war. . . . But . . . it seems that the rate will have to be higher than the present level. The unions have decreed it.
>
> (*Economist*, August 20, 1955.)

In September the British Employers' Confederation came out with their notorious statement demanding a halt to wage increases and the creation of unemployment at least up to the 3 per cent. level envisaged by Beveridge (which means 800,000 out of work).

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The main means to create 'flexibility', 'elbow-room', or any of the other pretty Tory names for unemployment, is through the attack on housing. The sharp reduction of local authority building will directly increase unemployment there—enough at any rate to check the competitive bidding between building employers for labour of which the B.E.C. Conference on October 28 so loudly complained. Further, the rise in rents, along with the increases in purchase tax, is likely to have quite a sharp effect on workers' purchases of items like clothing and television sets. If the Tories are successful enough with these attacks to go on with further cuts, the effect on purchasing power will be still greater.

Finally, the cuts in investment by nationalised industry and Government departments will work in the same direction. The 'credit squeeze' by the banks, while it will not stop the big trusts investing to their hearts' content out of undistributed profits in pubs, super-cinemas or commercial T.V., will choke off some of the smaller and weaker firms from capital expenditure and thereby 'free' more workers from their jobs. If this enables the employers to save the extra plus-rates and overtime payments, it will knock a great hole in wage-packets.

For political reasons, the Tories and the capitalist class will be nervous about seeing unemployment return to the levels of the 1930's, which would threaten the foundations of their rule. This will make it difficult for them to carry out their policy effectively. As the *Economist* sourly put it (November 5):

> One suspects—or rather fears— that the actual course of (Butler's) policy may be to allow unemployment to increase to about its average level under the Labour Government, and then to start re-inflating again as soon as it has gone far enough to lose him that talking-point.

But the British capitalists are not the only pebble on the beach. Once an effective bout of wage-cutting is started here, it invites and indeed practically ensures competitive wage-cutting by other capitalist exporting countries. This means restricting the mass market for consumer goods throughout the capitalist world, and only a vast mass market can provide profits on the huge investments now being undertaken in industries like motors. Once deflation becomes effective it may well help to produce the vicious downward spiral in which hundreds of small and medium-sized capitalists—earnest Tory supporters—are ruined and gobbled up by the monopolies, while their workers are thrown on the streets.

The main line of opposition to the Budget selected by Gaitskell and Morrison seems, in view of all this, quite fantastic. Although

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they had to reflect in verbal abuse something of the indignation felt in the movement, they did *not* attack the Chancellor for making heavy cuts—indeed Mr. Gaitskell went so far as to say, 'I do accept the need for a Budget at this time . . . and for cuts of this order'.

Their principal case for a vote of censure was that Butler should have brought in his cuts in April, before the General Election: then the Labour Party might have won the election, and Gaitskell instead of Butler would have had the privilege of introducing 'cuts of this order', with perhaps rather more use of direct physical controls of imports and building, in addition to financial restriction. The Labour leaders did not oppose reductions in local authority building, though they would have favoured direct instructions from the Government to each authority to cut its programmes rather than restriction of finance by the banks. They did not oppose increases in rents as such. Morrison even had a good word to say for differential rents schemes.

But while the leaders' attack was blunted by their agreement with the Tories on the essentials of imperialist policy, the feelings of the rank and file have burst out since the Budget in the declarations of union after union and Council after Council, as well as by a number of back-benchers speaking in the Budget debate itself. M.P.s who seized on the key points—the need to cut armament expenditure and expand trade with the Socialist countries—were Frank Allaun (Salford East) and Lena Jeger (Holborn and St. Pancras South). The Labour movement, and above all the trade unions still have power to stop the Tory robbery provided that they act with determination and unity (and speaker after speaker on the Tory side in the Budget debate showed themselves uncomfortably aware of this). First and foremost, this means demanding substantially increased wages, and readiness to use the full industrial power of the unions to secure them.

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MIDDLE EASTERN QUESTION

R. PAGE ARNOT

THERE is nothing like a Lord Mayor's banquet for ripe facundity from prime ministers. It has had this effect for generations, from the three-bottle men onwards. This time it was Sir Anthony Eden parroting and expanding the Dulles declaration of ten weeks earlier on the Middle East, and ending with the almost audible sob of a Pecksniff as he said 'If there is anything we can do, anything, we will gladly do it for the sake of peace.' (November 9, 1955.)

Why, who is it has caused war and war-tension in that area? Successive British Prime Ministers, one Foreign Secretary or Colonial Secretary after another, each of them posturing as 'Her Britannic Majesty's Government', each of them responding to the needs of British imperialism. With them successive premiers and ministers of foreign affairs of the French Republic with French finance capital behind them. With them successive secretaries of state of the U.S.A., each a mouthpiece for Standard Oil and for other Yankee interests. These are the war-mongers, the stirrers-up of strife, the fomenters of discord and battle and murder and sudden death in that area of ancient civilisation, in those Bible lands. The smell of petroleum drew them thither before the 1914-18 war: the smell of its untold riches of oil-fields brought them thronging to Persia, to Mesopotamia, to every other area to prospect for oil and oil dividends. Greedy multi-millionaires like Sir Henri Deterding of Royal Dutch-Shell or Calouste Gulbenkin of the Iraq Petroleum Company or the old Rockefeller of Standard Oil would readily risk a war for dividends, for money. And when the peoples in these lands were beginning to seek their rights, it was the imperialists of Britain, France and the U.S.A. which set them quarrelling—as today in Buraimi Oasis the Arabs of the Persian Gulf are set to fight the Arabs of Saudi Arabia, because American oil trusts were muscling in on a preserve of the British oil interests.

For those who have caused the tension, the war danger, the recurrent slaughter to pose now (as Eden or Dulles would do) in the guise of impartial persons keeping the balance evenly is an access of hypocrisy.

What, after all, is 'the Middle East'? It is the name invented by the imperialists (and now conventionally used by agencies of

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the United Nations) to cover a dozen countries that were nearly all at one time part of the Ottoman Empire of the Turks and that then became the object of intensive exploitation by the imperialists. These lands, important as a sector in the world struggle against the forces operating to maintain imperialist domination and exploitation, achieved a new importance because of the Anglo-American war plans for bases and alliances there while each year new discovery of oil resources made it by far the most important oil area in the world.

Ever since President Truman in March, 1947, announced plans of United States imperialist expansion ('the Anti-Communism doctrine') at the same time as he took over from Ernest Bevin the support of the delinquent rulers of Turkey, repeated efforts in these last eight years have been made to involve the countries of the Middle East in the cold war against the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies. Various methods have been tried, but the peoples' resistance caused them to fail.

In 1951 Turkey, historic oppressor of the Arab peoples, was with the 'three Western powers' to form the core of an Allied Middle Eastern Command. This plan for continued armed occupation of Egypt and other countries was brought to naught by the peoples' resistance. But the aim remained, to form an anti-Soviet ring of States on the southern border of the U.S.S.R. So, last year, once the popular electoral victory in East Pakistan had been cancelled out by Yankee aid and the Governor-General's *coup d'état,* the setting up of the Turkey-Pakistan Pact as a war alliance that would link the Powers allied in N.A.T.O. with the Powers allied in S.E.A.T.O. seemed to promise success.

It was soon to be paralleled by what it was hoped would be a more effective linking-up of 'the Northern tier' of Middle Eastern states. Ten months ago, on February 24, 1955, the Turkey-Iraqi Pact (the Baghdad Pact) was signed. Within a few weeks Britain acceded to it and within a few months, Pakistan. On October 12, under somewhat obvious financial pressure, Iran also acceded.

How did Iraq get drawn into this Pact with Turkey? The blatantly undemocratic procedure (in a country where in December, 1948, popular demonstrations in Baghdad destroyed the Portsmouth Treaty that a British Foreign Secretary had been so pleased to sign) is an instructive example of Anglo-American methods. Nuri el Said had been known these many years as a politician friendly to British Imperialism. Nuri el Said is of Turkish origin. Nuri el Said could

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be relied upon for hostility to the peoples' democracies and to the U.S.S.R. Nuri took over the Prime Ministership in Iraq on August 4, 1954; dissolved its parliament forthwith; on September 12, 1954, staged in Iraq a general election which even *The Times* report called 'phoney'. Nuri then outlawed all political parties, prohibited all public meetings and closed down most of the newspapers. The road was then clear for the pact with Turkey: preparations went ahead: and on January 3, 1955, Iraq announced that it would break off diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R.

At last, it seemed, the imperialists had obtained an effective substitute for the abortive Allied Middle Eastern Command, and Cyprus, their new headquarters and base, was to be denied for all time the right of self-determination.

Egypt stood out. In Egypt the British attempt to keep the Canal Zone occupied by British troops had been defeated by the strength of the national liberation movement. To the Iraqi announcement of a forthcoming arrangement for British troops to occupy Iraqi territory Egypt reacted sharply. Where Egypt led, Syria and Saudi Arabia followed and also the Yemen. The Arab League* was rent in twain. Its meeting of January 22, 1955, was not attended by Iraq. The result was increased tension between Iraq and Egypt; and also between Turkey and Syria. There, in Damascus and Aleppo there were stormy demonstrations against the Pact and in favour of Egypt. From India, Nehru denounced the Turkey-Iraq pact as a dangerous move towards war.

This opposition of Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser to the imperialist war plans brought with it an orientation drawing towards that of India in international relations: Nehru when in Cairo in February, 1955, declared 'identity of view' with Nasser.

Much has happened in these nine months since the Turkey-Iraqi pact was signed at Baghdad amid the jubilation of British imperialists but against the grave warnings that came from India and elsewhere. In its external relations Egypt under Nasser began to play a positive role. This was seen at the Conference of African and Asian countries (April 18-24, 1955) at Bandung in Indonesia. The effect of Bandung was enormous and continues. It cut across the plans of the imperialists. It strengthened moves towards independence. The speeches of Chou En-lai gave greater confidence to the peoples of Asia and Africa. Bandung, where Egypt was outstanding

*The League of Arab States, as formed on March 22, 1945, was made up of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. A defence agreement, signed in Cairo on April 13, 1950, came into force on August 23, 1952: this was adversely affected by the Baghdad Pact.

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among the countries of the Middle East, was an encouragement to all the peoples of semi-colonial countries.

Trade relations followed on Bandung. The People's Republic of China bought £10,000,000 worth of cotton, the biggest single order ever delivered from Egypt. The Soviet Union agreed at the end of April to supply £2,000,000 worth of paraffin in return for Egyptian cotton. Rumania too, purchased one million pounds' worth of cotton yarn. Now Egypt's trade, its balance of payments, and general economic condition, depend mostly on cotton. Of this, a surplus of unsold stocks has been piling up. The United States could give no help, even if it wished, for the United States is a rival seller of cotton, and indeed it was the dumping of U.S. cotton on European countries that contributed to the cotton crisis in Egypt. These economic purchases, therefore, enabled Egypt to become stronger, not only economically, but politically, and to begin to shake loose from Anglo-American tutelage.

Thus, throughout this year, Nasser has been coming more and more into open opposition to the Anglo-American war plans.

Consequently it became the prime purpose of the imperialist powers (British, French and United States) to prevent Egypt from getting away out of their grasp. Neither Macmillan nor Dulles nor Pinay could easily adopt dulcet accents and sigh:

O for a falconer's voice
To lure this tassel-gentle back again

But what they did was to exercise all the possible pressure they could upon Egypt. In all their various relations with Egypt, difficulties began to crop up. For example, the 75-year-old triangle of Egypt, Britain and the Sudan seemed less than ever equilateral, became more and more scalene.

Furthermore, the supply of arms to Egypt which had been going on under the 1950 agreement between the British, French and United States governments, began to be held up. Traffic began to be made conditional. United States agencies tried to woo Egypt by promising not only arms but all sorts of aid if only Egypt (which felt itself threatened) would fall in with the American war plans. Here is a remarkable interview given by Nasser to a U.S. journalist which deserves to be closely studied. Note the terms of the dialogue:

Question. 'As I understand it, you could have gotten arms from the United States, couldn't you, if you had agreed to accept a small military mission that would supervise the use of the arms?'

Answer. 'I refused that. We don't like military missions here. An American mission means American influence. . . . We had British missions

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here for 75 years, and now we cannot just substitute an American mission for the British one.' . . .

Question. 'But do you really believe, Mr. Prime Minister, that if an American military mission is here they will say to you: "Mr. Prime Minister, you must do this, you must do that, you must vote this way in the United Nations, and so on"?'

Answer. 'Our people would think that having an American mission here would be foreign domination. We didn't throw out a British mission in order to get an American one in its place.'

(*U.S. News and World Report*, November 4, 1955, p. 48.)

Now, had Egypt succumbed to this pressure, had it become part of the Anglo-American war plans, then American and other arms would have flowed up the Nile, in great quantities, without a voice raised in Britain, or in the U.S.A. At this point when so many conditions were being attached to the sale of arms, Egypt was able to reach an agreement with Czechoslovakia for arms in exchange for cotton and rice—with no conditions attached.

Immediately this was announced (on September 27) there went up a howl in the press that Czechoslovakia with the backing of the U.S.S.R. was creating a 'crisis' in the Middle East: and when a fortnight later the Soviet Ambassador in Egypt announced that the U.S.S.R. was willing to finance development projects (such as the Assuan High Dam) in Egypt and other Arab countries, the writers in capitalist newspapers were almost beside themselves with rage. Mournfully *The Times* stated:

Russian funds for the High Dam would be a master stroke of Soviet policy and the severest rebuff for the Western powers. (*The Times*, October 11, 1955.)

The imperialist powers might well be upset by such a development. For well-nigh 40 years the imperialists have exploited the Middle East without let or hindrance from any but the internal national liberation movements. The imperialists have had their rivalries with one another and have quarrelled over what they regarded as edible fragments of the Ottoman Empire.

The British who at one time hoped to keep the Americans out of the Middle East were forced to let them into the oil-field business. The Italian imperialists as an enemy power in the 1939-45 war were forced to drop their booty. Towards the end of that war the French were eased out of Syria by British help to the Liberation movement. Since the war the British have been eased out of several key positions by the U.S.A.: hence the anger of the right wing Tories a year ago against the behaviour of the U.S.A. in Egypt and over Persian oil.

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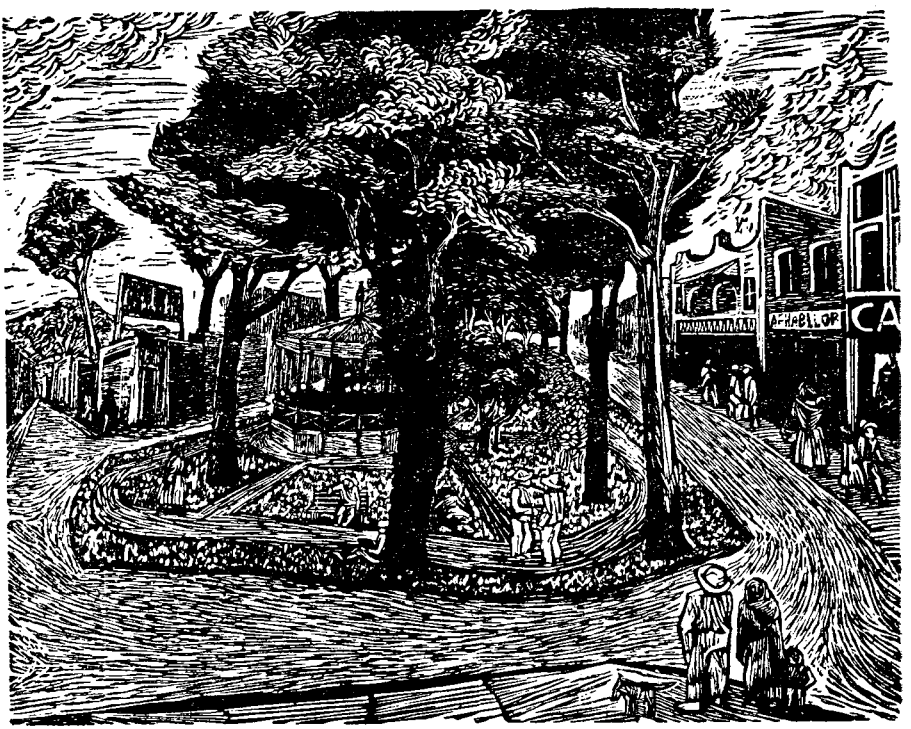
TWO ENGRAVINGS

by Morton Dimondstein

The Taller De Grafica Popular is a workshop where numbers of artists combine to produce prints, engravings, lithographs, etc., for use in large quantities by the Labour, Trade Union and Peace movements in Mexico.



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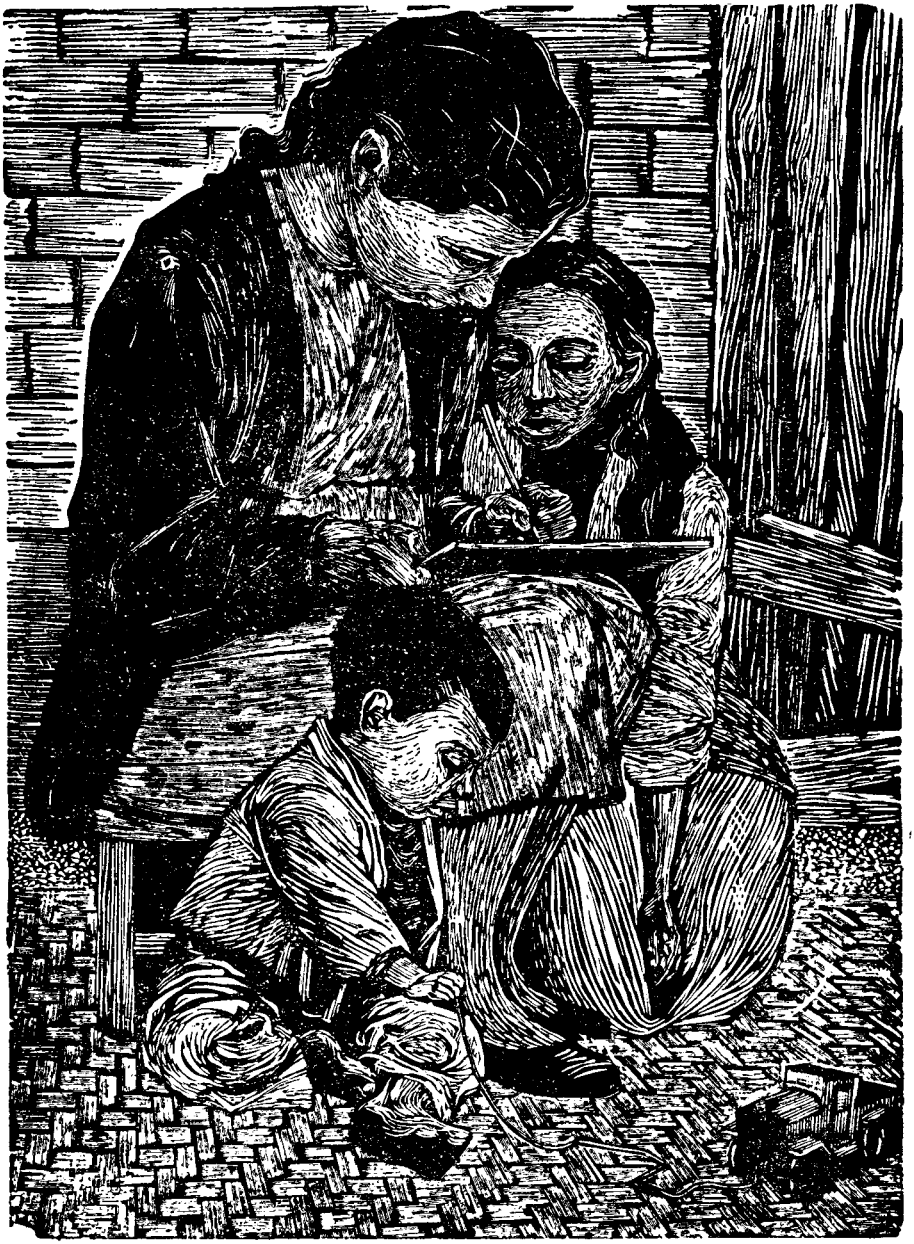

Writing

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But whatever might be the rivalries, trickery or treachery it was always between allies that were each of them capitalist powers, each regarding the states and peoples of the Middle East as mere pieces or pawns on the chess board. It is an entirely different matter when a great power comes on the scene which is not driven by the lust for exploitation and profit, and which will stand by any country that takes up its own position, independent of the imperialists.

In this situation (and before these latest developments) the Western powers have sought to use Israel, whom they count on as being definitely on their side,* as a means of exercising pressure on the Arab states. As the difficulties with the Arab states, especially with Egypt grew greater, then within Israel the circles that were closest to the U.S.A. took on a more and more bellicose tone. For example, long before Czechoslovak arms were sold to Egypt, Israeli aggressive acts (described as such by the Security Council on March 29) occurred at the Gaza strip. Ben Gurion was making speeches, which even the *Jewish Chronicle*, normally a close supporter of the Israeli Government, described as 'sabre-rattling' and said were 'giving further ammunition to Israel's enemies'. (May 6, 1955.) The elections in Israel, held in July, resulted in a considerable rise in votes for the parties that advocate a so-called 'activist' policy, that is a preventive war against Egypt.

This endeavour to use Israel in the interests of the imperialist powers is extremely dangerous and can lead to a conflict that would be perilous for the people of Israel. In this situation one must take heed of what is said by the Central Committee of the Israeli Communist Party, which in its appeal of a few weeks ago issued the warning that:

> The popular masses of Israel love their country and are ready to sacrifice themselves for its freedom and security, but they are not interested to give their lives as the 'American gendarme' in putting pressure on Egypt to force it to adhere to the anti-Soviet military pacts of the U.S. Government.
>
> (Appeal of Central Committee of the Israeli Communist Party printed in the *Daily Worker* of November 1, 1955.)

No; that is clear enough. And it should be clear also that the interests of the people of Israel, in common with the interests of all the peoples of the Middle East, requires first and foremost the elimination of the imperialists from any part or lot in that region of the earth.

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*'Israel's support of the West is dependable no matter whether or not that State is admitted into the Western Alliance system. Aid and investments have forged close ties between Israel and the United States.' (Hedley V. Cooke, Foreign Investments in the Middle East Region 1944-1953, *Middle Eastern Affairs*, New York, April, 1954, p. 114.)

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THE SOVIET NAVY TODAY

Commander EDGAR P. YOUNG, R.N., Retired

THE recent exchange of friendly visits between the British and Soviet navies has undoubtedly done much to foster the development of 'the Geneva spirit', of which it was, of course, one of the first outcomes. Certain circles in this country have, however, chosen this moment to use it, rather, for fomenting a 'naval scare'. What are the real facts?

Let us start with the most publicised statement in this misleading campaign, that made by our First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, on October 13, when he described the Soviet navy as 'the greatest potential threat the Royal Navy has ever been called upon to face'. This shocking act of tactlessness and discourtesy was made more so by the fact that Mountbatten, as one of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, had, on that very day, been entertaining the Soviet Admiral Golovko and a number of his senior officers to luncheon at Admiralty House. Coming from Mountbatten, it was obviously deliberate, which begs the question: 'Why?' Mountbatten has achieved the goal of his life, by becoming what his father, Prince Louis of Battenberg, was on the eve of the First World War, only to find that the navy over which he exercises supreme command is absolutely and relatively much smaller and much less important than that of 1914, and, indeed, that its very necessity is being seriously questioned in the highest quarters. It must have cut him to the quick, a few days earlier (October 10), when the American Admiral Wright, speaking to a conference of N.A.T.O. Defence Ministers in Paris, described the Soviet navy as 'the second in the world', thus rubbing in the fact that the U.S. navy is now the first—a fact which must, sub-consciously at any rate, have alarmed him. And on top of all this, he had had Vice-Admiral John Hughes-Hallett, Retired, now Conservative M.P. for N.E. Croydon, pointing out to the Annual Meeting of the Council of the Navy League on October 11 that our navy of 20 years ago, though half as large again as our present one, employed about half as many officers, and, notably, 16 fewer admirals! It would be understandable if one factor which influenced Mountbatten was simply the desire to have more ships to play with, to justify his having more admirals to command. The way in which he has done this, however, and the way

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in which his cue has been taken by the Press, make it quite evident that the main factor was a political one: the reversal of the present popular trend towards peace and friendship with the Soviet Union. It is from this angle that we must try, therefore, to deal with the matter, bearing in mind, I suggest, what was written by Lord Salisbury in 1901: 'It would hardly be wise to incur novel and most onerous obligations in order to guard against a danger in whose existence we have no historical reason for believing.'

How conjectural are the various 'authoritative' statements made from time to time regarding the strength of the Soviet navy will be evident from the fact that within the month of October it was stated by Admiral Mountbatten and *The Times* Naval Correspondent to have about 350 submarines, by *Jane's Fighting Ships—1955-56* to have more than 400, and by *Brassey's Annual—1955* (quoting 'an Admiralty estimate') to have 500! This written, let us accept, with reserve, for the sake of argument, a rough mean of these conjectures, that the Soviet navy has about 30 cruisers, 100 destroyers, 350 submarines, and 4,000 aircraft. We must now divide this total into four parts, because, for geographical reasons, the Soviet Union must have four separate fleets (Northern, Baltic, Black Sea, Far Eastern), of which the two major ones must obviously be in the land-locked Baltic and Black Seas, of which the exits are held by N.A.T.O. Interchange of units between these, never a very simple process, must be regarded as virtually impossible in time of war.

With this disjointed navy, the Soviet Admiralty must try, in wartime, at least: (a) to defend some 29,000 miles of coastline (two-thirds of the total frontiers of the Soviet Union!), much of which is within easy striking distance of foreign territory, against bombardment, amphibious raids, and invasion; (b) to provide security against attack by mine, surface or submarine warship, or aircraft for coastwise shipping along much of that coastline, which has now assumed major dimensions and become of vital importance. If it is true, as was stated by the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Thomas, in New York, on February 16 of this year (1955), that 'the U.S. Fleet now has aircraft capable of delivering nuclear weapons on targets many thousands of miles away', one must subscribe to the view expressed by Rear-Admiral A. D. Torlesse, in *Brassey's Annual—1955*, that 'a series of striking forces capable of delivering this kind of attack (which he regards as being available to N.A.T.O.*

*He wrote actually, 'the United Nations'!

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today, with its 25-30 fleet carriers), operating over an area of hundreds of thousands of square miles would constitute a menace no enemy could possibly ignore for a moment'.

If we examine now in more detail the units constituting the Soviet navy, we find that it has obviously been designed to cope with the tasks just specified, which are essentially of a defensive character, and could hardly be used for any other, *e.g.,* offensive, purpose. It is a notorious fact, which has often been adversely commented on by our naval experts, that in ten of the cruisers and all the destroyers exceptionally high speed, and in the latter case more powerful gun armament, have been achieved at the expense of endurance (range) and sea-keeping qualities, with the result that they are suitable for use in home waters only, if we regard these as extending a good way beyond the traditional 'three-mile limit' which has become unrealistic in modern conditions. So far as the submarines are concerned, about two-thirds of them are of the *Maliutka* and *Shchuka* classes, coastal submarines, described by Commander Anthony Courtney in *Brassey's Annual—1954* as 'clearly defensive', and as 'no threat to Atlantic convoy routes', respectively. Most significant of all, however, is the fact that the whole of the Soviet navy's aircraft are land-based. The Soviet navy has not a single aircraft-carrier, and has none building or projected. This means that none of these aircraft can operate, either independently or in co-operation with naval units, beyond a certain range of their bases (which are all in Soviet territory). That range may be considerable, but it can hardly be such as would make them a threat to any ship on the high seas, *i.e.,* to any ship other than one which might come near enough to the Soviet coast to be able to deliver attacks against Soviet territory or against shipping in Soviet waters. 'Their main function in war-time', states *Brassey's Annual—1955,* 'would undoubtedly be reconnaissance, and they could presumably guide submarines to worth-while targets', such as a carrier striking force.

Rear-Admiral H. G. Thursfield, Editor of *Brassey's Annual,* who was presumably responsible for the statement just quoted, expressed himself puzzled, in last year's edition of that publication. 'It remains a matter of some surprise', he wrote there, 'that, in view of Russia's growth in maritime power, the whole of her naval aviation remains shore-based'; and again, 'It is difficult to understand the strategic reasoning which demands so large a naval air element and yet accepts the handicap of comparative immobility in the lack of even a single carrier'; and he concluded, 'their naval purpose would

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appear limited to defence alone'. His other self, however, the Naval Correspondent of *The Times*, basing himself, he says, on 'an analysis of various reports on the recent British naval visit to Leningrad and the comparison of these with information previously available', seems somehow to have revised his appreciation of the Soviet Admiralty's 'strategic reasoning', to fit in with Mountbatten's egregious declaration already quoted. In *The Times* of October 25, he wrote:

> It is evident that the Russian intention is to challenge Anglo-American naval supremacy out in the ocean . . . it is probable that, as the Russians have no aircraft-carrier, their task (*i.e.*, that of their large cruisers) would be the cutting of sea communications during the decisive period of 'broken-back' war after the strategic air forces of the combatants had been spent.

The absurdity of this appreciation of the situation is apparent if one considers that, in the kind of war which Admiral Thursfield envisages, it is reasonably certain that the effect of an almost complete blockade would have been achieved before the period of which he writes, by the comparatively simple process of exploding nuclear weapons under water in the approaches to all the major ports of Britain and of the West European seaboard, thus rendering them radioactive, and practically speaking unusable, for a prolonged period (as described in my article in *Labour Monthly*, June, 1952, and as implicitly admitted by the Government's spokesman in the debate on Home Defence in the House of Lords on November 2, 1955). It is difficult to understand why the Soviet Union should waste labour, materials, and man-power on the construction of large cruisers and ocean-going submarines to duplicate this process, more slowly and less certainly, especially when one recalls what happened to the enormously powerful German battleship *Bismarck*, in the last war, when she went out with no aircraft-carrier, against an enemy who had a few. Admiral Thursfield's reasoning becomes even more difficult to follow if one refers back to the feature article headed *American Navy's Massive Strength* which he contributed to *The Times* as recently as September 23 of this year, in which he estimated Anglo-American naval strength as 118 aircraft-carriers (101 of them American), 20 battleships, 99 cruisers, 819 destroyers and escorts, and 257 submarines. This is, incidentally, the force which Admiral Mountbatten regards as so seriously threatened by, if we accept his own figures, 20 large cruisers and 100 large submarines!

It is not surprising, in the circumstances, that the *Manchester Guardian*, which had been swallowing and peddling this sort of

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tripe during the whole period of the exchange of naval visits, found itself compelled at last, on November 5, to admit, in a leading article headed 'White Elephants', that it did not make sense . . . unless, it concluded,

> The Russian conception of naval strategy in another war would certainly differ from ours, based as it is on hard-hitting mobile air power (*i.e., aircraft-carriers*) and perhaps eventually on long-range guided missiles.

The difference is, of course, one of policy, rather than of strategy. Our strategy, as quoted above, is the expression of an aggressive policy, as is, even more markedly, that of the United States, of which *The Times* Naval Correspondent wrote on September 23, in the article mentioned earlier, as follows:

> The American Fleet is an instrument of policy, rather than of diplomacy. . . . In American naval thinking, anti-submarine and anti-mine defence take second place to offensive policy. The American Fleet is now built around the carrier striking force, and when the Forrestal-class carriers (*60,000-ton ships of which the first was launched recently, and three more are to be built*) come into service, these mobile strategic air bases will operate jet bombers heavier than the R.A.F. Canberra. The carriers themselves will be protected by guided missile cruisers, the first two of which will be ready this autumn, and screens of escort destroyers. The ship-based air striking force will be supplemented by large submarines, probably nuclear-powered, capable of launching surface-to-surface guided missiles against targets inland. Battleships, it is believed, will before long be armed with atomic shells for their heavy guns.

Few, reading this description, will subscribe to the view expressed in *Jane's Fighting Ships—1955-56* and quoted with apparent approval by the Defence Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* on November 3, that the U.S. navy is 'tactically offensive and strategically defensive', while the Soviet navy is 'tactically defensive and strategically offensive', which is what Mountbatten and his Press 'toadies' would have us believe, in the face of all evidence.

It is quite obvious, in fact, that these people, when they refer to the Soviet navy as a 'potential threat', have in mind the very real threat that it would represent to their navies, if they were to venture within striking distance of the Soviet Union, as is intended. It is more probable, moreover, that an important factor in relation to our own Admiralty's attempt to work up a 'naval scare'—apart from that already mentioned—is to ensure orders for plenty of new warships, in which our shipyards, already feeling the pressure of foreign competitors, would have no competition from abroad, and on which the profits (paid by the taxpayers) are notoriously very great.

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WHEN TRADE UNIONS UNITE

LOUIS SAILLANT*

DURING the month of October, millions of workers in every continent rightly celebrated the tenth anniversary of the founding of the World Federation of Trade Unions as an event of prime importance in the history of the international working class movement and as a great forward step of the world trade union movement. Ten years ago for the first time in history there appeared a united and militant international trade union organisation with sections everywhere in the world. The first truly world-wide Trade Union International was born.

The tenth anniversary of W.F.T.U. today brings into full light again the great lesson of the Paris Congress of October, 1945. The decision to convene that Congress was taken by the World Trade Union Conference of London which was itself called together on the joint initiative of the British T.U.C. and of the Central Council of Soviet Trade Unions. In 1945 the structure and organisation of the Soviet trade unions was just as it is today. Nevertheless at that time the British T.U.C. saw no obstacle to prevent a working understanding with them. Besides, since 1941, joint activity had been going on between the two organisations through the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee.

During the London meeting (February, 1945) neither political divergencies nor religious or philosophical differences hindered the workers of the U.S.A., Great Britain, China, France, the Soviet Union and the whole world from agreeing to unite all the strength of the international working class into a single organisation with the aim of a common struggle for their common objectives: the well-being of the working people and peace. And it was the Vice-President of the American C.I.O., the late Sydney Hillman, who rightly underlined:

> Yet we have shown ourselves capable of reconciling all differences and are hammering out a programme on the basis of agreement upon the great common objectives which unite us all.

Ten years ago the Paris Congress gave a practical and striking demonstration that there is no insurmountable obstacle to unity when the will of the workers is respected. Today, workers often think back to this time when international trade union unity was

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established. They realise very well indeed that its re-establishment would play a decisive part in making successful the efforts which have been made to ease international tension still further and to improve their living and working conditions. The working class, then, calls for friendship between all unions; for their co-operation, for their unity. That is the deepest, most urgent need today.

The proceedings of the Executive Bureau of the W.F.T.U., the twenty-eighth session of which was held at Budapest from 10th to 12th October, aimed above all at responding to this appeal, at taking effective measures to ease relations between all trade unions without discrimination and to bring about their co-operation. It was in this spirit that all statements were drafted and all decisions made. In particular, the Executive Bureau published in Budapest a 'Declaration on Recent Progress in World Trade Union Unity'. A careful examination of the situation, in fact, convinced them that a statement such as this was indispensable at the present time. The examination threw into relief this fact of great importance: the conference of the heads of the American, French, British and Soviet governments which met at Geneva, marking a victory for the spirit of negotiation over the policy of force, has given birth to a new situation in the trade union field. The Geneva conference created conditions for a *rapprochement* and closer co-operation between the unions. Never have the workers and unions of every tendency expressed so forcibly their desire to unite and to strengthen international working class solidarity as during these last months.

A number of facts bear witness to this. Firmer unity characterises the powerful wage struggle which has been developing for some time in the main capitalist and colonial countries. Moreover, in recent congresses such as that of the British unions which traditionally stands out in international trade union circles, and also in the Australian Trade Union Congress, the question of unity was debated in a much more positive way. The day will come when leaders of the T.U.C. such as Sir Vincent Tewson, will explain their objections around a table, face to face with those to whom they are addressed. Open discussion in good faith is the only way to advance along the road of international trade union unity.

There exist other conclusive expressions of the desire for unity in the trade union movement. Exchanges of workers' delegations are taking place by the hundred. New relations, a better understanding, is being established between unions of different countries and diverse affiliations. A number of trade union leaders in Great

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Britain, the Federal German Republic, in Scandinavia, India, Japan and Canada, are coming out in favour of fraternal relations between all trade union organisations. In the United States a trend arising in the workshops is developing in the same direction. The W.F.T.U., which ever since its foundation has made a sustained effort for unity, records with satisfaction the important successes achieved in this connection.

What are the demands upon which workers of all affiliations are uniting and acting and which could serve as the basis for strengthening further common action? In the first place the workers who all rejoiced at the earlier steps towards easing tension, want a further advance along this road. They want concrete measures to be taken to further the easing of tension and consolidate peace. They are demanding in particular a substantial simultaneous and controlled reduction of armaments. On the other hand, considering that security would be illusory as long as colonial and imperialist aggression continues, they demand that full satisfaction should be given to the aspirations for national independence of the oppressed peoples. This is the firm and concrete basis for international co-operation between all unions.

In addition, the present situation in the capitalist and colonial countries is also characterised by an intensification of capitalist exploitation. For years past, employers and governments have been striving to crush the workers' struggle by brutal repression and also to smother them with propaganda which extols the virtues of class collaboration. Billions are spent to convince workers that their lot is bound up with that of their employers, that wage increases bring with them inflation and put industry in difficulty in face of foreign competition and that the only way for the working people to improve their lot is to increase production. In actual fact this campaign has meant for the capitalists a constant increase in their profits. But for the workers the result has been altogether different. Speed-up has been pushed to inhuman limits. The working day has been lengthened. Wages have become more and more inadequate for workers to maintain their strength. From this has come a grave worsening in their health and exhaustion which results in their being lost to production very early. Those in the trade union movement who deny this evident intensification of capitalist exploitation are contradicted by all the factual evidence and find no response amongst the workers.

What reception can this lauding of productivity within the capitalist régime find amongst workers who are fastened to their

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machines by their forearms so that they can keep up with the speed of output, as happens in Paris at the *Compagnie Industrielle des Telephones*? Or amongst workers who are sent into oxygen chambers to give them the strength to last out their day's work as is the case in many workshops, notably in the United States? Workers in capitalist countries realise that their position is worsening. They are hardly likely to believe that it can be improved by increasing productivity. Trade union leaders who claim the contrary know that they are isolating themselves from the workers and that they are responsible for it. While they preach class collaboration to the workers strike follows strike in France, in the U.S.A., in Italy, in West Germany, in Holland, in Canada, in India, in Japan, in Chile, in Brazil, in Uruguay. In Great Britain there have been twice as many men on strike as in the corresponding period last year. At the present moment seven million British workers are demanding wage increases. These struggles bear clear witness to the reality of capitalist super-exploitation and spotlight it. They demonstrate also that the international working class is vigorously resisting the offensive of employers and capitalist governments against their basic interests by putting forward their demands—in the forefront of which is to be noted the increase of wages and the reduction of working hours without any loss of earnings—and in struggling vigorously for full satisfaction.

These immediate demands are obvious bases for national and international trade union united action. Since the attacks of the employers and governments are co-ordinated and supported by propaganda which uses the same argument throughout the capitalist world, it appears more and more clear to all workers, whatever their trade union affiliation, that only international co-operation between all trade unions without discrimination will make their struggle fully effective and allow them to make substantial gains. The Executive Bureau of the W.F.T.U., following its analysis of the workers' struggles for economic and social demands, came to this conclusion.

Do some people really believe that the spirit of Geneva is going to serve them as a chain to bind the workers and to deliver them up as slaves to the rapacity of capitalist exploitation? It is altogether obvious and natural that face to face with capitalist greed the workers cannot and will not for a single moment give up their efforts to win less inadequate wages, less inhuman conditions of work. To this notion I can only repeat what I wrote in the October number of *World Trade Union Movement:*

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It is idle and nonsensical to imagine that this gigantic struggle of the forces of the world working class aimed at winning socialism as a form of higher and more humane society than capitalism, can be halted. It is idle and nonsensical to imagine that W.F.T.U. could ever cease to give its assistance and support to the struggle of the workers for their economic and social demands directed against the exploitation to which they are subjected in capitalist and colonial countries.

If the W.F.T.U. since its foundation has enjoyed prestige and ever-growing influence, it is because it has remained steadily faithful to the aims which governed its foundation, because it has remained the organisation of unity and of the struggle of all the workers of the world who defend their common interests. The work of the twenty-eighth session of the Executive Bureau shows once more that W.F.T.U. has remained faithful to its reason for existence. To prove it, it is sufficient to quote the conclusion of the 'Declaration on Recent Progress in International Trade Union Unity' unanimously adopted at Budapest:

It (the W.F.T.U.) calls on workers of all countries, and trade unions of all affiliations, to build up by every means the unity of the world trade union movement. Great success will thus be ensured for the workers' struggle for a better life, for freedom and peace, for the consolidation of ties of friendship and co-operation between States and the peoples in the spirit of the Geneva Conference.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

ANSWER TO IMPERIALIST INTRIGUE

The League Against Imperialism calls on all British workers to give their whole-hearted support to both the Jewish and Arab workers and peasants of Palestine and of all other Arab countries in the struggle for the overthrow of imperialist exploitation, and the establishment of real national independence. The League points out the danger of rank and file workers being misled into religious and racial strife by imperialist intrigue. . . . The British section of the League Against Imperialism therefore appeals to all its members and affiliated organisations to work for:

1. The withdrawal of all British armed forces from Arab countries and from Egypt; the renunciation of the British mandate in Palestine, Transjordania and Iraq; complete national independence for all these peoples, with the formation of a federation of Arab States if desired.
2. A free Palestine with equal rights for all national minorities and based on the unity of Arab and Jewish workers and peasants and full support for the agrarian revolt of these peoples against imperialism.
3. Full political and trade union rights for Jewish and Arab workers and peasants.

From *The World of Labour: Palestine*, December, 1930.

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BEHIND THE TIMES

ANGELA TUCKETT

IT was a gloomy picture that *The Times* gave recently of the labour press. Its Labour Correspondent, in a survey on October 24 of the 300 monthly and weekly periodicals within the labour movement, came to the conclusion that their state of health is poor indeed. The 'more than ample potential readership' of the labour movement does not support them. They rely upon open or indirect subsidies and even so are struggling for existence. And the Labour Party Executive even cannot carry out the decision of 1952 and launch a right-wing weekly.

The writer has zealously turned over many stones and explored many avenues and dark alleys in bringing interesting facts to light about our contemporaries. His survey comprehends not only official publications of the Labour Party and trade unions, but also of independent groupings, some actively hostile to the Labour Party. Only three, in *The Times* Labour Correspondent's view, 'make any appreciable impact on public opinion'; all are of 'independent' groupings. With the exception of *New Statesman and Nation,* which comes into the category of commercial press and devotes more than a third of its space to advertisements, none pay their way without subsidies. The Bevanite *Tribune,* for example, gets help from 'Mr. Foot and others putting their hands in their pockets from time to time'. In a serious emergency the Labour Party had to come 'to its aid by taking a couple of full-page advertisements'; moreover 'it is said to have made an approach to the *Daily Mirror*'. As to monthly periodicals, the more recent right-wing *Socialist Commentary* is 'kept afloat by the help of some trade unions', explains *The Times* Labour Correspondent, 'and by an organisation called "Friends of Socialist Commentary",' presided over by Mr. James Griffiths, Mr. Alfred Robens and Mr. Gaitskell himself. The Labour Party's official *Fact,* even after being enlarged three years ago, succeeded in reaching only 'some 15,000, but it has to be subsidised to some extent and has little public impact'. As to the 90 national trade union journals, the writer dismisses these as mostly 'free to members as part of the return for their contributions and it is not certain that all are read'.

Whether moved by glee or gloom, *The Times* Labour Correspondent paints the darkest picture, unrelieved by play of light

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and shade. Yet there is life and light in the labour movement. His portrait would have been more life-like had he not been led, perhaps by enthusiasm for sombre hues, to overlook *Labour Monthly*, for example. Since he needed correction, the following letter was written to *The Times*:

Sir,

From the interesting and informative article by your Labour Correspondent about the variety of publications within the labour movement, it seems to emerge that such political periodicals are in a bad way. It appears that it would indeed be unique today if there were, for example, a monthly which was:

(i) unsubsidised by any organisation or financial angel;
(ii) independent of advertisers;
(iii) circulating over 10,000 copies; and
(iv) of any length of standing.

The nearest your Labour Correspondent can quote as approaching this position is Mr. Gaitskell's *Socialist Commentary*, 'kept afloat by the help of some trade unions', its circulation a secret, but 'well under' the crucial figure. The complete picture is not, however, quite so gloomy as that article would suggest. For there is at least one monthly political commentary within the labour movement which fulfils these conditions.

With a monthly sale of 12,500 copies during 1955, having paid its way for 35 years with the sole support of readers' donations (averaging £40 and published each month), *Labour Monthly* is subsidised by no organisation, political fund, bulk purchases by trade unions nor even by the device of the sale of full page advertisements. So that it seems that the Marxist *Labour Monthly* is unique—both in its achievement and in its failure to receive your Labour Correspondent's mention.

Over 14 years ago, George Bernard Shaw described the survival of *Labour Monthly* with a five-figure circulation as 'a prodigy'. Yet it remains a singular thing how few people realise fully what a triumph it is to keep *Labour Monthly* standing on its own feet, holding an enviable circulation for so many years without reliance on open or hidden subsidies or conceding excessive space to advertisers. Out of our sales not only do we pay our printers' bill on the nail and buy our text and cover paper: we also pay rent, rates, heating and lighting; we pay wages of the staff; we pay for telephones, cables and all the thousand and one adjuncts of running a magazine. All out of sales, relying for development on our readers' own fund. Readers of the labour movement keep us going because we have something to say that they want said. That is the enviable secret.

It is also typical of what has always been the true picture of the labour movement, from the time of the Chartists onwards. How

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comes it that *The Times* can continue to err? For it is not the first time it has proved more than somewhat behind the times. In the fourth volume of its official history (published 1952), in listing every newspaper, great and small, there remained invisible to it the *Daily Worker,* already then of 22 years' standing. None so blind as those that won't see. But its present article proves to all within and without the labour movement, let who will blink the facts, that *Labour Monthly* is the premier labour monthly, without exception.

And well they know it.

Book Reviews

AMBASSADOR TO CHINA

In Two Chinas, by K. M. Panikkar. (183 pp. Allen & Unwin. *12s. 6d.*)

MR. PANIKKAR was the Indian Ambassador to Kuomintang China for the last year or so of its existence, and to the People's Republic of China for the first three years of its life. He played a very important and valuable role as Ambassador in the promotion of friendly relations between India and China and his book contains much information bearing not only on this, but also on the Korean War—where his record of some of the U.S.A. diplomatic steps has been largely noted in the press reviews. But at the same time there is a certain disappointment. A man of erudition and intelligence — particularly an Asian—should have been able, with such opportunities, to give us not merely an interesting but a really profound and educative book. Unfortunately he does not do so. Much of the book contains accounts of almost trivial and superficial events, rather like diary entries. The impression that it is really written up from diaries is heightened by the fact that the two parts—that dealing with the Kuomintang régime and that dealing with new China—do not fit in very well. Anyone reading the first part would find it hard to believe that the author shared—or even understood—the deep-seated Chinese resentment of imperialists and imperialism; but the second part shows that he clearly does.

And that large part of the book which rises above triviality still misses the inner meaning, the depths, of the two Chinas and the magnificence of the revolution which replaced the one by the other. The reason for this failure is, I think, that the author is deeply impregnated with the poison of anti-Communism. Such labels as the 'free world'—in reality the capitalist world in which no man can be truly free—and 'the sacrifice of the individual to the State'—in reality the existence of states which devote themselves to securing for every individual except the exploiter the opportunity to develop his individuality—mean to Mr. Panikkar what they mean to the ordinary American propagandist. (One wonders, as always, whence people who are in other respects both intelligent and well-informed get their ideas of what Communism is. The author writes frankly: 'My knowledge of Communism was only from books', but does not tell us what books.) Perhaps the most re-

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vealing passage in the book is to be found in the statement that Chou En-lai 'is . . . a staunch and convinced Communist and a trained theoretician *but* he also has his feet firmly planted on mother earth'. If the author could have written *and* instead of *but*, he would be a better man and would have written a better book.

Nevertheless, deeply as a misunderstanding of Communism can and must poison a mind, the author is not unsympathetic to new China, and many of the merits of this great renascent nation, whose revolution is one of this century's two great contributions to human happiness, come shining through the pages of the book; the short descriptions of several of the leaders of the People's Republic are true and sympathetic. One masterpiece of understatement deserves quotation: 'Generally it was clear that the new régime was anxious to cater for the working class'. The book is, of course, well-written and pleasantly readable; it is a tragic result of the tares sown by anti-Communism that it is not something many times better.

D. N. PRITT

EYEWITNESS TO GREAT CHANGES

China Phœnix, by Peter Townsend. (406 pp. Cape. *25s.*)

I FIND a special pleasure in this book. Not only for its own merits which stand out for all to see, but from more personal reasons. As a young man I remember Peter Townsend as one eager to learn about Socialism. When he went out to China with the Friends Ambulance Unit I was pleased, very pleased. I knew that Peter Townsend would learn to know and to love the Chinese people, whom I had known and loved after my first visit there in 1931. Townsend's letters to me from the far North West during the war were of great value. Not only in giving details of the struggle against Japanese Imperialism but even more in showing his growing disillusionment with Kuomintang China and all that Chiang Kai-shek represented. When finally he went North to throw in his lot with Rewi Alley and the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives I was by no means surprised. With that society he played his own small part in the struggle for freedom of the Chinese people. Later he visited Yenan. Few Englishmen are better qualified to judge and appraise the great and splendid transformation that the Chinese people, through their struggles, have achieved. His description of Shanghai before May, 1949, and his eye-witness account of its last days and fall is a brilliant piece of descriptive writing that gets to the very heart of things and moves the hearts of all who read it. It is not only excellent in itself but it explains the speed with which all China opened its arms to the People's Government and the astonishing speed with which its prepared though administratively untrained cadres restored order after the Kuomintang chaos.

Through all the great and epoch making changes that followed the setting up of the People's Government Townsend conducts us with consummate skill. He dramatises events and movements by focusing them in persons and personal events. The book, from one angle is a series of short articles as it were, each a complete whole in itself. It is like The Bedside Book. You can pick it up and read any section and be stimulated by it, at the same time there runs through the whole book a magnificent and co-ordinated movement, following the movement

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that has resulted in the China as it is today. There is the great land reform, the changed method of government, changes in industry and their effect upon industrial workers; changed attitudes to women and, indeed, all the new ways that the new times have brought in their train. This is a book for anyone who wishes to understand how the Chinese revolution worked itself out in practice. It is written in an excellent and intimate though dignified manner: an excellent companion to the books by Rewi Alley.

HEWLETT JOHNSON

A MAN OF HIGH COURAGE

The 13th Juror, by Steve Nelson. (252 pp. Masses & Mainstream, New York; Collet's, London. *10s. 6d.*)

STEVE NELSON is a representative of that other America—the America of working men and women, of progressive people who refuse to be intimidated and silenced by witch-hunts and terrorism. He was born in Western Pennsylvania in a company-owned steel town and started work when he was 12 years old, getting a job in a Philadelphia slaughter-house and later in the shipyards. He joined the Communist Party on the first anniversary of Lenin's death, at a memorial meeting in Philadelphia. He did organisational work among miners and steel workers and played a prominent part in the unemployed movement. During the Spanish War he had a distinguished record in the International Brigades as battalion commander and brigade commissar. Ever since 1950 he has been waging an equally gallant and certainly more difficult struggle against the courts and jails of American capitalism, facing charges of 'sedition' and of having 'conspired to teach and advocate the violent overthrow of the United States government'. In *The 13th Juror* he tells the story of part of that struggle. The title is taken from his address to the jury during his trial, when he told them that the thirteenth juror was bias, prejudice, bigotry, narrow-mindedness, 'fear of what some people may say', 'the boss for whom you work'.

A man may be very wise and brave and still fail to write what we call a 'good book'. Steve Nelson, however, has certainly written a 'good book' and, one is tempted to say, a great book. He has succeeded in conveying the atmosphere of Blawnox Jail in pages that give the very feel and smell of the place, with all its cruelty and corruption. That is not all, for Nelson has shown how, in that place which existed to break men physically, mentally and morally, a man was able, with his courage and understanding, to frustrate the purpose of his judges and jailers and win a victory for human dignity. The story of his life in prison and his trial is told in simple, straightforward language. Here is a paragraph, chosen almost at random, in which he describes his arrival in a punishment cell in Blawnox Jail:

> The guards left. The place became almost completely dark, even though it was just about 10 a.m. I didn't put on the shirt and pants, which were so crusted from human dirt and sweat that they stood up like frozen clothes on a line. My feet were especially uncomfortable. The unfinished concrete floor cut the soles so that they really hurt. The smell of human bodies was awful. At first I could hardly see, but gradually my eyes got used to the bit of light which came from the small bulb burning at the end of the long corridor thirteen cells away. While I couldn't see much, there actually was no need for light since I had nothing to read

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or do and nothing to look at but the dirty yellow walls. Nevertheless I missed the light. I felt the walls with my hand. They were damp and grimy. Then I walked over to the door, held on to the bars, and began to stare into the empty dark.

The prisoners called this place the 'hole' and Nelson has written some pages describing what he managed to do there which may well live when Dulles and McCarthy are disposed of in a sentence or two in the history books. When he went into the 'hole' Nelson was met by a terrible roar of sound from the inmates. 'The iron bars literally shook with the noise, and the language was the foulest I've ever heard. I wished now that I hadn't understood any of it. The shouting grew more violent by the minute as men took sides in the unintelligible argument. Blood did not flow only because they couldn't get at each other'. He was able to transform that din into rational, friendly conversation and community singing. Here is his comment on what he achieved: 'We were happy over the turn of events. It wasn't the violence or the volume of the shouting alone that had bothered me. It was the vicious atmosphere it created. The idea that victims of such cruel mistreatment could take it out on each other instead of their jailers—that was what disturbed me. I could just see the sadist officials walking out of the hole-corridor, turning off the lights and locking the door, then listening to the animal-like noise and fights that started as soon as they stepped out. They must have been happy about it, for they never let on that they knew what was happening'.

There is a magnificent account of Nelson's battle against a red-baiting judge and the perjured witnesses of the prosecution. But I could go on quoting from this book almost endlessly. The thing to do is to read it and think about it. It contains a warning and a hope—a warning about the kind of men who misgovern the United States and mete out 'justice' there, and the hope that comes from the knowledge that against them are fighting men and women like Steve Nelson.

Nelson's fight goes on. He was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment on one charge and five years on another. The twenty-year sentence was quashed by a higher court, but attempts are being made to have it reimposed. One of the many lessons brought out in Nelson's book is the great support and encouragement provided by international solidarity. Here are the words the writer Howard Fast has used to describe Steve Nelson: 'This is a very great man, a man of high courage, whose voice is eloquent, whose spirit is high, and whose bearing is gallant and brave'.

R. MALCOLM

BELFRAGE IN GERMANY

Seeds of Destruction; The Truth about the U.S. Occupation of Germany, by Cedric Belfrage. (232 pp. Cameron & Kahn, New York; Collet's, London. *12s. 6d.*)

THE 'Truth' is in itself a large claim, but here we have a very large slice to justify the title. No wonder this little volume of Belfrage's got under the skin of the McCarthyites and played a large part in stimulating the venom with which they pressed *his* particular persecution drive to the point of chasing him out of the country. Belfrage himself served in the ranks of the democratising crusaders who entered Germany armed with an Eisenhower directive saying that Nazism must go, and found themselves disarmed by the

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fact that its proper application would have spelled doom to all the business connections, caste associates and sleeping partners of their superior officers. Belfrage tells his tale not in the form of a diary, nor of a novel, but somewhere betwixt and between, the successive chapters that carry on the narrative each being told, in the first person, by a participant in the events—werewolf or other Nazi, incipient German democrat, honest but dumb American liberal, or far-from-dumb American blonde-collector. The canvas is narrow—the birth and decline of a free German press under guidance of an earnest and hard-working U.S. military government unit—but the events narrated convincingly and without exaggeration, are so typical of the whole of what happened to distort and ruin the Allied victory—that it serves as an important (maybe still, even in this day and age, eye-opening) piece of testimony to what will ever remain one of the worst stories in the world.

IVOR MONTAGU

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are also useful statistics and diagrams. To too many on this side of the Atlantic the whole region is an unknown, thought of if at all in derogatory terms associated with the odd performances of occasional millionaire visitors or dance bands, or the obsequious servility to the Pentagon of so many diplomats of South American countries at international conferences. In reality South America is a seething, passionate area of the world in growing, dignified revolt against the humiliations and disabilities imposed upon it by U.S. policy. Those who do not want to be caught unawares by coming developments should certainly study this pamphlet.

I.M.

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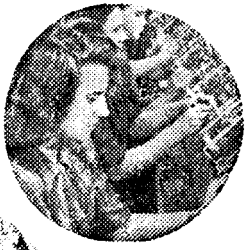

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